Draft Global Targets on Ageing for the Year 2001

The General Assembly, in resolutions 46/91, 46/94 and 45/106, called for a set of global targets on ageing for the year 2001 to provide a pragmatic focus for the broad goals of the International Plan of Action on Ageing and to accelerate the Plan's implementation.

The global targets' ultimate purpose is to support national responses to the ageing of populations as well as to create an environment where the talents of older people find full expression and their care needs are met.

The proposed targets are as follows:

Global target 1:
Support countries in setting national targets on ageing.

As countries set targets, international cooperation on reaching selected targets could be established, and the transfer of aid, skills and technologies could be improved.

Global target 2:
Generate support for integrating ageing into national and international development plans and programmes.

The objective is to ensure that countries wishing to adjust national development plans and resource allocation to respond to population ageing can receive the expert advice and assistance of international development agencies.

Global target 3:
Generate support for community-based programme of care and participation of older persons.

Global target 4:
Improve cross-national research on ageing including harmonization of terminology and methodology.

Global target 5:
Include an item on ageing in international events and meetings of relevance.

It is necessary to raise awareness concerning: the impact of population ageing, the need for individuals to make life-long preparation for old age, the varied roles of older people in society and the value of a caring society.

Global target 6:
Establish a global network of senior volunteers for social and economic development.

This target calls for utilizing the accumulated wisdom and skills of older persons in support of United Nations development, environment, and peace programmes.

Global target 7:
Facilitate closer cooperation among non-governmental organizations on ageing.

Global target 8:
Facilitate closer cooperation among inter-governmental organizations on ageing.

UNITED NATIONS

Short Guide for Setting National Targets

To assist Member States in setting national targets on ageing for the year 2001, the following guide has been prepared. It is organized according to the priority areas of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, such as infrastructure, health, housing, family, education, social welfare, and income security. Relevant quotes from the Plan of Action are included under each heading.

The Plan of Action states that national strategies should be "conceived and phrased in terms of the traditions, cultural values and practices of each country or ethnic community and... adapted to the priorities and material capacities of each country or community".

Basic national infrastructure targets

"The success of this Plan of Action will depend largely on action undertaken by Governments to create conditions and broad possibilities for full participation of citizens, particularly the elderly..."

Strengthen or establish a national coordinating mechanism on ageing.

A national coordinating mechanism is a government-appointed body for developing and promoting implementation of the national strategy on ageing.

Promote the establishment and effective functioning of organizations of older persons.

Promote the expansion or establishment of intergenerational policies and programming.

Improve or establish standards with enforcement protocols for elderly-care providers, including in-home, community based and residential settings.

Integrate the issues of ageing into national development plans.

Strengthen or establish national education, training and research activities on ageing.

Ensure that national data collections include information which is gender- and age-specific.

Produce, disseminate and periodically update a national directory of public and private organizations concerned with ageing and of services and opportunities for and by older persons.

Produce and widely disseminate regular reports on the national ageing situation.

Establish mechanisms to examine and adjust existing legislation and practices for major omissions, contradictions and discriminations with respect to older persons.

Health and nutrition targets

While the rapidly increasing number of old people throughout the world represents a biological success for humanity, the living conditions of the elderly in most countries have by and large lagged behind those enjoyed by the economically active population. . . .

"A fundamental principle in the care of the elderly should be to enable them to lead independent lives in the community for as long as possible."

Launch a campaign on "Healthy Ageing" for all.

This campaign should stress a holistic approach to health, with a balance between physical, intellectual, social, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. It could be addressed to schoolchildren, as well as the public at large, and will aim at decreasing the risk of dependency in old age through an emphasis on avoidance of health-damaging habits and practices.

Establish national indices of health and disability among the aged.

Ensure that primary health care is available and accessible to the elderly.

This would include the development and expansion of community-based and in-home long-term care programmes. It would also embrace the evaluation and, where appropriate, revitalization and expansion of the use of traditional healing and disease prevention methods.

Encourage the establishment of a technical aids supply system.
This would encompass funding and distribution of health accessories and equipment, with special attention to eyeglasses, hearing aids and teeth prostheses needed for prevention and treatment of age-related disorders.

Provide adequate nutrition, especially for the elderly at risk, including such groups as refugees, victims of disasters and those in isolation.

Strengthen or establish a public health programme ensuring accessibility to clean water and adequate sanitation for the elderly.

Housing and living environment targets
"Adequate living accommodations and agreeable physical surroundings are necessary for the well-being of all people, and it is generally accepted that housing has a great influence on the quality of life of any age group in any country. Suitable housing is even more important to the elderly, whose abodes are the centre of virtually all of their activities...."

Provide support for the elderly so they may continue living in their own homes as long as possible or choose alternative accommodation if their home is no longer suitable or desired.
These supports may include in-home health and social services, home maintenance and rental assistance.

Provide barrier-free and community integrated accommodation and public facilities for the elderly in cities, towns and villages.

Promote community education on personal security in the home and community.
This should address accident prevention and security against crime and abuse.

Provide and enhance accessibility and mobility for the elderly to work, social and health services and leisure facilities.

Family targets
"The family, regardless of its form or organization, is recognized as a fundamental unit of society. With increasing longevity, four- and five- generation families are becoming common throughout the world. The changes in the status of women, however, have reduced their traditional role as caretakers of older family members; it is necessary to enable the family as a whole, including its male members, to take over and share the burden of help in and by the family...."

Develop and enhance skills whereby older men and women may fulfil their roles as family leaders, counsellors, and care-givers.
This could also mean training for the elderly in mediation techniques and in transmitting and evaluating traditional values in new situations.

Promote, enhance and support family care-giving.
This would include, among other things, information and training on care-giving, housing and rental subsidies for multi-generational families, provision of respite care, remuneration for unpaid long-term care-giving and consideration of time spent on care-giving for pension-scheme calculations.

Establish support groups for families with special problems and special care-giving needs, such as those having to deal with dementia and physical disabilities.

Integrate the issue of ageing into national activities for the International Year of the Family (1994).

Education and media targets
". . . In many of the world's societies, the elderly still

serve as the transmitters of information, knowledge, tradition and spiritual values: this important tradition should not be lost."

". . . There is also a need to educate the general public with regard to the aging process. Such education must start at an early age in order that aging should be fully understood as a natural process. The importance of the role of the mass media in this respect cannot be overstated."

Launch information, education and communication campaigns on ageing to promote positive images of ageing and ageing as a subject of general social relevance in which everyone participates.
These campaigns should be initiated by or directed towards policy makers, educators, practitioners, religious leaders, publicists, older persons, families and the general public. These could be tied in with observance of 1 October, the International Day for the Elderly.

Incorporate information on ageing in primary- and secondary-school curricula, as well as specialized information and courses on ageing in post-secondary level social, health, political, religious, economic, architecture, planning and design studies, among others.

Provide key roles for older persons as voluntary or paid resource persons in literacy programmes, public awareness campaigns and education programmes on cultural traditions and heritage, the environment, substance abuse and other areas.

Provide literacy education and continuing education for older persons.

Integrate the subject and activities of ageing into national events and meetings.

Disseminate and apply the "United Nations Principles for Older Persons".
Endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session in 1991, the 18 principles, briefly address questions of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity.

Social welfare targets
"Social welfare services can be instruments of national policy and should have as their goal the maximizing of the social functioning of the ageing. They should be community-based and provide a broad range of preventive, remedial and developmental services for the ageing, to enable them to lead as independent a life as possible in their own home and in their community, remaining active and useful citizens."

Enact legislation to ensure equitable access for older persons to social welfare services.

Examine and determine the most equitable and efficient mix of public and private incentives which encourage the development and provision of services and opportunities for older persons.
As noted in the Plan of Action, this should include the reduction and elimination of "... constraints on informal and voluntary activities, and eliminate or relax regulations which hinder or discourage part-time work, mutual self-help and the use of volunteers alongside professional staff in providing social services or in institutions for the elderly".

Give recognition to services providers, including informal care-givers of older persons, by providing training, adequate compensation and a positive public image.

Strengthen or establish a community-based continuum of care programmes.
These programmes should aim at developing supportive partnerships for care between the informal and formal sectors.

Employment/income security targets
"... Many developed countries have achieved universal coverage through generalized social security schemes. For the developing countries, where many

if not the majority of persons live at subsistence levels, income security is an issue of concern to all age groups. . . . the social security programmes launched tend to offer limited coverage...."

Institute a national programme to promote productive ageing.

This programme would encourage access to credit for older persons so they may engage in income-producing and/or voluntary service on behalf of themselves, their families and their communities. Such activities could include drawing on community-based skills banks of older persons, self-employment, the development of second careers, senior cooperatives and part-time jobs, including as trainers and teachers, health care providers and volunteers.

Establish, strengthen and implement schemes or strategies to provide income security for all older persons at levels appropriate to the national economic and social infrastructure.

This would entail a variety of approaches, including a flexible attachment to the workforce through continued productive work on a voluntary basis, adaptation of working conditions to the physical abilities of the older person, training and retraining, and remuneration and credit for contributions to the informal sector economy, including farming, care-giving and child care. These approaches may be considered as well as more traditional public pension schemes.

Establish a "safety net" where pension and other schemes do not exist or are inadequate.

This would entail targeting resources to poor and needy groups of the elderly, with special attention given to disabled, widowed, isolated frail elderly persons as well as refugees.

Examine options available to older workers for flexible and gradual withdrawal from, and extension of, formal employment in accord with national and social infrastructures and resources.

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